

Demographic Snapshots

a monthly look
at Seattle's
population &
housing changes
from the City
Demographer

Seattle Poverty Rates Vary Widely

Rates Still High among Hispanics, Recent Immigrants, and Certain Race Groups

At the close of the 20th century, the proportion of Seattleites who lived in poverty was at its lowest point since 1980. But for Hispanics, recent immigrants, and people in certain race groups, poverty still ran high.

Census 2000 reported that over half of the Seattleites who lived in poverty were white, yet whites were less likely to be poor than any other race group (see **Graph 1**). For every 11 whites living in Seattle in 2000, only one had an annual 1999 income below the federal poverty level.

People of Asian descent had the next lowest rate of poverty followed by people who are in more than one race group; Black or African Americans; and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders. American Indian/Alaska Natives was the most likely race group to live below poverty—one in every three or four were considered poor by federal standards.

A person living alone on a 1999 income under \$8,667 was below the federal poverty line. For other examples of income levels below the poverty line, see the November issue of *dpdINFO*.

Poverty and Hispanic Ethnicity

The federal government treats race and Hispanic ethnicity separately. Since 1970 the census has asked people whether they

are Spanish/Hispanic/Latino (the terms are used interchangeably). The federal government defines Hispanic* as "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race."

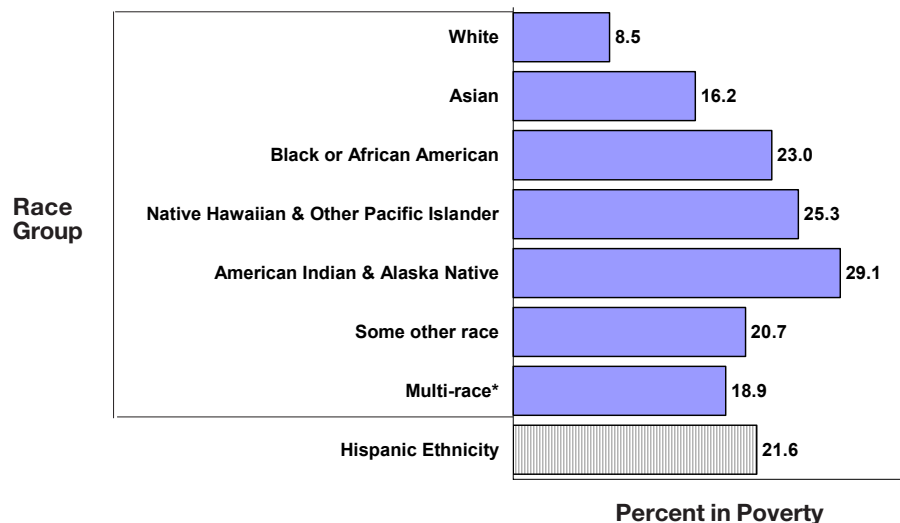
In Seattle, the largest share of Hispanics are white (42 percent); 6 percent belong to one of the other race groups listed; 12 percent are in more than one race group listed; and 40 percent belong to a race not listed on the Census form.

Seattleites of Hispanic origin were about two and one-half times more likely to live in poverty than were non-Hispanics. The poverty rate for Hispanics who identified their race as white was much closer to the

See **poverty & race** on page 2

Graph 1. Wide Racial & Ethnic Differences Evident in Poverty Rates

Percent in Poverty Among Race Groups & Hispanics in Seattle, 2000



* Multi-race refers to people in more than one race group.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3) Sample Data.

poverty & race, *cont. from page 1*

rate for other people of Hispanic origin than it was to the poverty rate of whites. For Hispanics, being white made little difference in the chance of being poor.

Poverty & Immigration

Immigrants were more likely to be poor than people born in the U.S. (see **Graph 2**). Census 2000 reports that 18 percent of all immigrants in Seattle lived below poverty, compared to 11 percent of Seattleites born in the U.S.

Poverty rates among immigrants were highest for the most recent immigrants; over one-quarter of those who arrived within five years of the census in 2000 were living below poverty. This likelihood eases with time spent in the U.S. Immigrants who had lived in the U.S. for 20 years or longer had about the same rates of poverty as people born in the U.S.

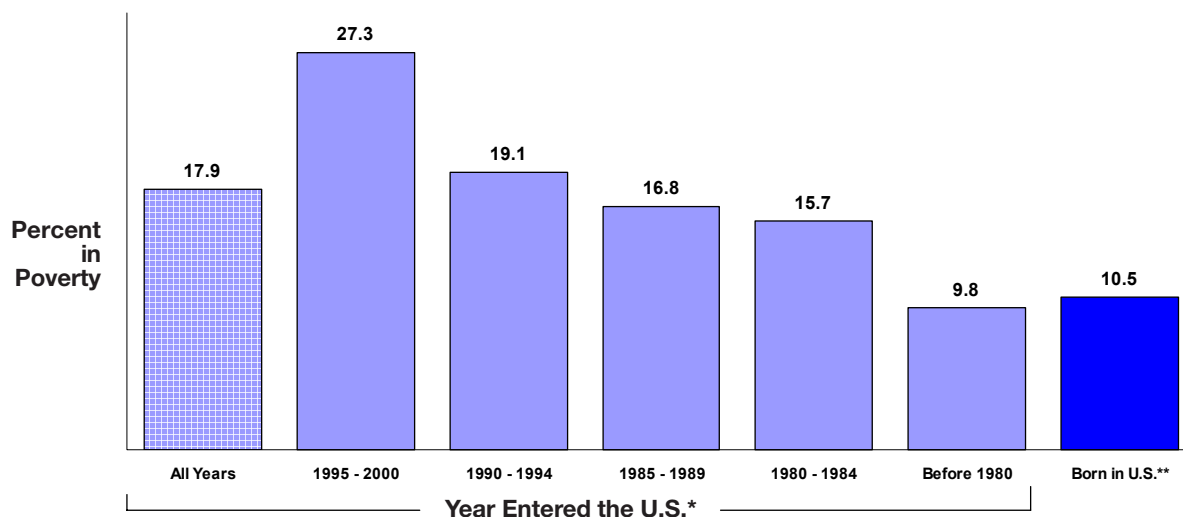
For more information, visit the City of Seattle's Population and Demographics website at www.seattle.gov/dpd/demographics or contact:

Diana Cornelius, City Demographer, DPD
(206) 615-0483, diana.cornelius@seattle.gov

American Indian/
Alaska Natives was the
most likely race group
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Graph 2. Newest Immigrants Most Likely to Live in Poverty

Percent below Poverty by Year of Immigration, Seattle, 2000



* Refers to January of earlier year through March of latter year.

** Includes people born in Puerto Rico and U.S. Island areas and those born abroad of U.S. parents.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3) Sample Data.